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Developments in Indochina

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Developments in Indochina

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Vietnam. 1

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[redacted] Hanoi
and the PRG are having their differences
over collaboration with the Trotskyites
in the international Communist movement.

CAMBODIA 3

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[redacted]
[redacted] Local speculators
are complicating the purchase of some
40,000 tons of much needed Thai rice.

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VIETNAM

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Vietnamese Communists, North
and South

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The North Vietnamese and PRG

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[redacted]

delegations in Paris, [redacted] are increasingly at odds over the various Trotskyite groups who have been involved in the European antiwar movement. Some PRG spokesmen, pointing to the effectiveness of the Trotskyites, have urged closer collaboration with them. The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, have insisted on working primarily with orthodox Communist parties in order not to jeopardize the "unity of the international Communist movement." On one occasion, according to the North Vietnamese official, the Vietnamese Communists in Paris decided after some debate not to send anyone to a Trotskyite meeting in Milan because the Italian Communist Party had asked them not to.

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Although the Trotskyite issue itself is of little consequence, any divergence between Northern and Southern Vietnamese Communists is significant. If their positions on this issue are any guide, Hanoi's men must now be tied more closely to Communist orthodoxy than the Viet Cong who urge a more freewheeling approach. Given the power relationship between the two groups, it is not surprising that the North Vietnamese viewpoint prevails.

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Rice Problems

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A group of Cambodian businessmen and government officials, and reportedly the Thai ambassador in Phnom Penh, are suspected of collaborating with high-level Thais to control the purchase of much-needed Thai rice. These official and unofficial representatives have offered a variety of contract terms for rice purchases which are significantly complicating the official negotiations between Phnom Penh and Bangkok. Moreover, the proposed contracts are unacceptable to the US, which is financing most of the purchase.

Any prolongation of this wheeling and dealing could cause some serious problems in Phnom Penh. The timing of the rice purchase is important because the capital may face critically short supplies by mid-summer. The government has been trying to get a firm commitment for at least 40,000 tons from Thailand, but the Thais have been willing to deal only in 5,000-ton increments. Thus far, only one 5,000-ton sale has been negotiated. Alternative rice sources are questionable. There is little if any rice available for export under PL-480 from the US until the harvest this autumn. Shortages in South Vietnam preclude reallocation to

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Cambodia of 25,000 tons of PL-480 rice that had been originally intended for Phnom Penh, although Saigon could probably help with some limited rice shipments if a mid-summer crisis develops. Japan could also help as it did with a 6,000-ton rice grant last year. Rice would probably have to be shipped from Japanese stocks, however, unlike the last grant which was paid for by Japan but shipped from Thailand.

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